



NEW FUNCTIONALITIES

Directly from the source



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Sometimes not only one ERP system successfully supports companies over many years, but also several in combination - in order to bring the best benefit to the user.

Doka Group is a member of the family-managed Umdasch Group, headquartered in Amstetten, Lower Austria, and is one of the world's leading companies in the development, manufacturing and distribution of formwork technology for all areas of construction. The main raw materials used are wood, wood-plastic composites, steel and aluminium. Burj Khalifa in Dubai, the tallest building in the world, the Lotte World Tower in Seoul, the tallest building in East Asia, the Vladivostok Bridge, which breaks two world records in terms of span width and pylon height - they were all built with formwork solutions from the Doka Group.

Various system components such as wall and floor formwork, climbing and load-bearing systems and safety systems are produced from a variety of raw and composite materials. Most of the production takes place in the central plant in Amstetten, but there are also production facilities in Slovakia and, more recently, in Russia, and an assembly site in Germany. The 6,700 employees are responsible for consulting and training as well as other services such as project management, ready-to-use service and assembly, reconditioning service, logistics and process optimization. The Doka Group has a powerful distribution network for a rapid and professional supply of equipment and technical support, extending to over 250 sales and logistics locations in more than 70 countries.

ERP software in a network

One almost expects to find a particularly sophisticated information technology, like a Super-ERP system, in such a successful company that handles the most demanding projects - and that's indeed

the case. Patrick Weiß, Project Manager and IT Application Specialist at Doka, reveals: „We use three ERP systems linked together via interfaces“. SAP is used for finance, cost accounting and internal resources, sales is organized with Microsoft Dynamics AX, and caniasERP from IAS GmbH is used for production, logistics and maintenance. The project manager answers the reason for this unusual combination as follows: „On the one hand, this has grown historically. But we also wanted to have the best software for each of the different areas“.

But you do not automatically expect to meet caniasERP next to Microsoft and SAP. „In 1995 we had to change our outdated system and replace it by a software which should reliably support us in the fast moving IT industry for at least seven years. Yes, and now we've been using caniasERP for over 20 years“, reports Doka software developer Christoph Palmeshofer. „Back then, the selection process involved almost every ERP manufacturer known on the market. Among them were several SAP partners, Baan, Brain and AS 400, but we didn't really feel happy at any one of them“. Even more by chance a brochure of IAS Industrial Application Software GmbH from Karlsruhe and their ERP software caniasERP caught the eye. „There we discovered several interesting possibilities for us“, Palmeshofer continues, „out of it this long lasting and very close cooperation developed“.

„And to this day we have never regretted it,“ adds Patrick Weiß. „Back then, not only certain products, but also ideas and visions were the decisive reasons for choosing the software house from Karlsruhe,“ he adds. The production system was introduced in autumn 1997, the purchasing module in 2001 and the maintenance module in 2010. „We

are currently carrying out a release upgrade to be technically up to date“, completes Christoph Palmethofer the historical outline. The reason for the decision for the release change was the integration of the Russian colleagues, since the system was not yet available in Russian in the version used. So caniasERP then controls the entire production in the locations in Amstetten, Slovakia and Russia as well as in the assembly plants in Germany, where the ERP system is used for order processing.

Company-specific special functions

„caniasERP is flexible beyond all measure“, Patrick Weiß summarizes the big advantage of this ERP software. „As a customer you get the source code. With it you can basically do what you want. Thus an expensive customizing is not necessary. Nevertheless, you can set up a company-specific system on your own, which offers all desired comfort and industry-typical functions in addition to the extensive standard functionalities“. However, you need to know exactly what processes are going on in your company and be able to use the development tool. „But this is relatively easy to learn, because broad rather than specialized knowledge is required,“ says Christoph Palmethofer. And Patrick Weiß adds: „The caniasERP standard modules cover three quarters of our requirements. The rest we could adapt ourselves. That was ideal for us“.

An example: For suppliers credit notes are generated. Trucks deliver material up to four times a day. „At the end of the month, we don't have an

invoice sent to us, but generate a credit note. This is easier for us“, Patrick Weiß describes such an adjustment. Orders are linked to goods receipts and credit note documents are created from them.

Similarly, the accounting for the leasing personnel was organized: All necessary data is collected via the personnel time and production data acquisition. Instead of sending this data to the employer for invoicing, the ERP system creates a credit note for him. Thereby, instead of the receipts of goods, the attendance data of the temporary workers are evaluated and processed like goods deliveries for the credit note document. The credit notes are created automatically and the manual effort is limited to a few random controls and plausibility checks.

Mobile maintenance

Due to the relatively large number of adjustments, updates become more and more complex. But since the places where something has been changed are known, the changes can be easily adjusted to the new standard. Then it can be checked whether only a few small process changes are necessary instead of making new adjustments. And Christoph Palmethofer emphasizes one thing in particular: „With IAS we get everything from a single source. In the case of a release change, we only have one consultant who knows our entire system“. This is also how the selection of the recently introduced maintenance module went: „All the stand alone solutions did not satisfy us. At SAP, four or five people came, each of whom was responsible for something different, while our requirements were clarified in one day with the IAS consultant,“ also highlights Patrick Weiß.

The new maintenance software should enable the use of mobile devices. This means that it is no longer necessary to walk through the halls with a notebook, but a tablet or an even smaller device can be used. If there is a defect in a production system, an employee can scan the QR code applied to all machines and then obtain all the data on the relevant machine from the system: for example, when it was last serviced, whether a particular defect occurs frequently or whether the engine has already been replaced. With this information it is possible to react much faster and much more targeted to the respective disturbance. And finally via the mobile device, feedback on the cause of the malfunction, replacement parts used and repair times can also be entered, which is important in terms of predictive maintenance. This is because the module calculates the initial maintenance dates based on the machine running times and creates corresponding planned orders, which are then converted into maintenance orders.

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All documents and user manuals are now also available on mobile devices. This means that every craftsman can quickly obtain information about the machine that is defective directly on site. Maintenance is also used to manage the equipment. Here you can find documentation, operating instructions, circuit diagrams and spare parts lists about the spare parts in stock and their allocation to specific systems. For example, you can see how many ball bearings are assigned to a plant and how many of them are actually in stock. „Although these are comfort functions,“ says Patrick Weiß, „they still speed up processes considerably.“

easily linked to our other systems“. He summarizes: „The last 20 years have confirmed that we have looked for the right ERP system and with IAS the right IT partner.“

Individuality thanks to open source code

The great flexibility and the combinability and openness with all systems is for project manager Patrick Weiß the biggest advantage of caniasERP. „Of course no system can offer everything we need immediately“, he knows, „but since we use the strengths of every software, an individual top system is created for us“. And caniasERP offers with the development environment Troia the technical basis to develop and optimize missing functions even if they are not included in the standard. „The Troia development environment and the open source code can be used to turn the standard version into our individual ERP system with company and industry-specific functionalities,“ confirms Christoph Palmetshofer.

Thus the so-called batch management was additionally programmed as single bundle management. Via a barcode label each stack of sawn timber delivered by the sawmill can be identified and the delivery date, supplier, material and quality of each stack can be called up. This detailed stock management is now mapped in caniasERP. Typical are also the production orders for combined production. Formwork beams are produced in lengths of up to twelve meters, standard lengths of up to six meters are available from stock. However, any length up to twelve meters can be ordered as special length. From the combination of products including special lengths, a production order with all components and operations is automatically created from lists of components and work plans. The different products are represented as co-products.

„We now have the Russian language package for our colleagues from Russia as well as the general multilingualism. And the new user interface is also a big step forward, the usability has become much better,“ says Patrick Weiß, who believes that the release upgrade has achieved the intended goals. And for Christoph Palmetshofer the highlight remains the flexibility and openness of the system: „With caniasERP we get a colorful mixture in which everyone finds his special tasks and which can be

